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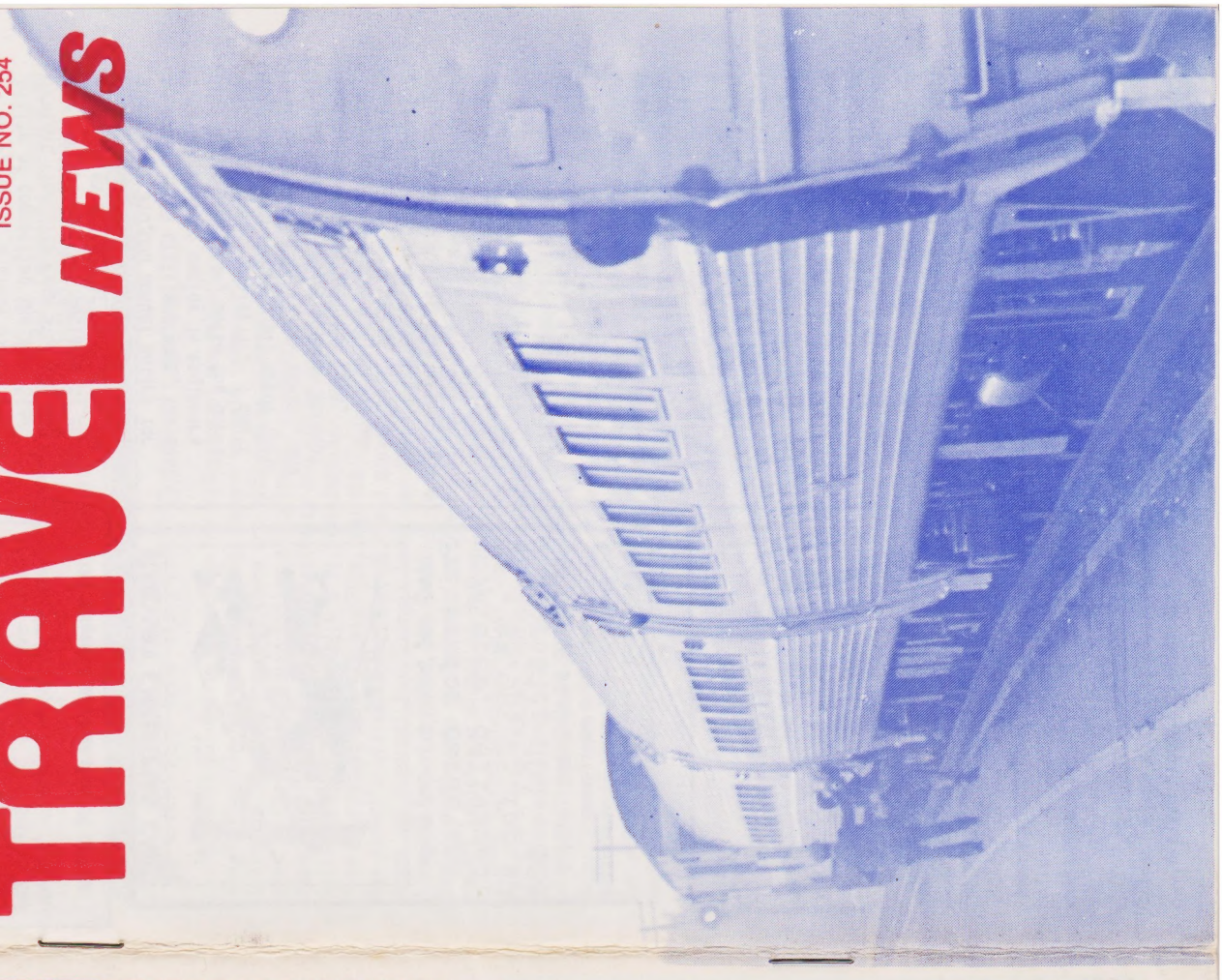
VOL. 12 NO. 18
OCTOBER 1982
ISSUE NO. 254

RAIL TRAVEL NEWS



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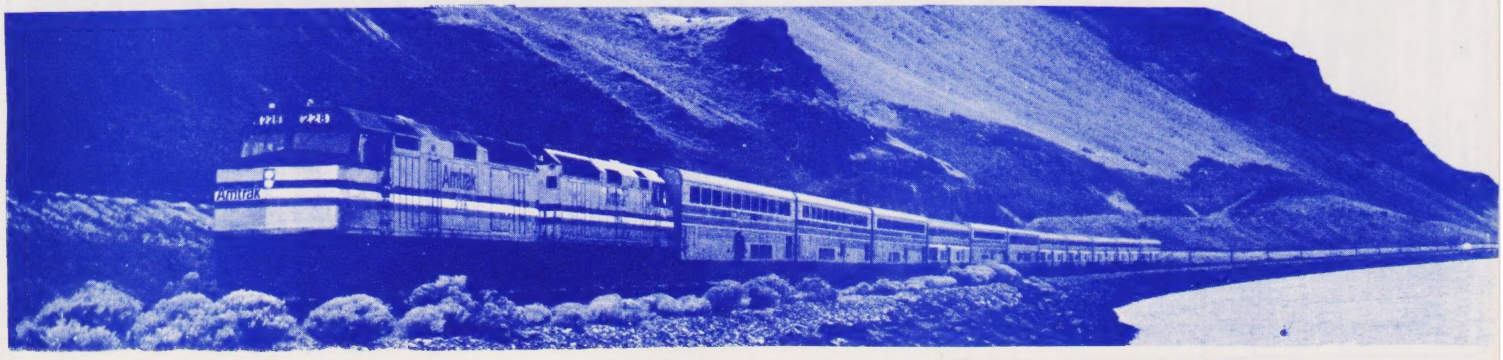

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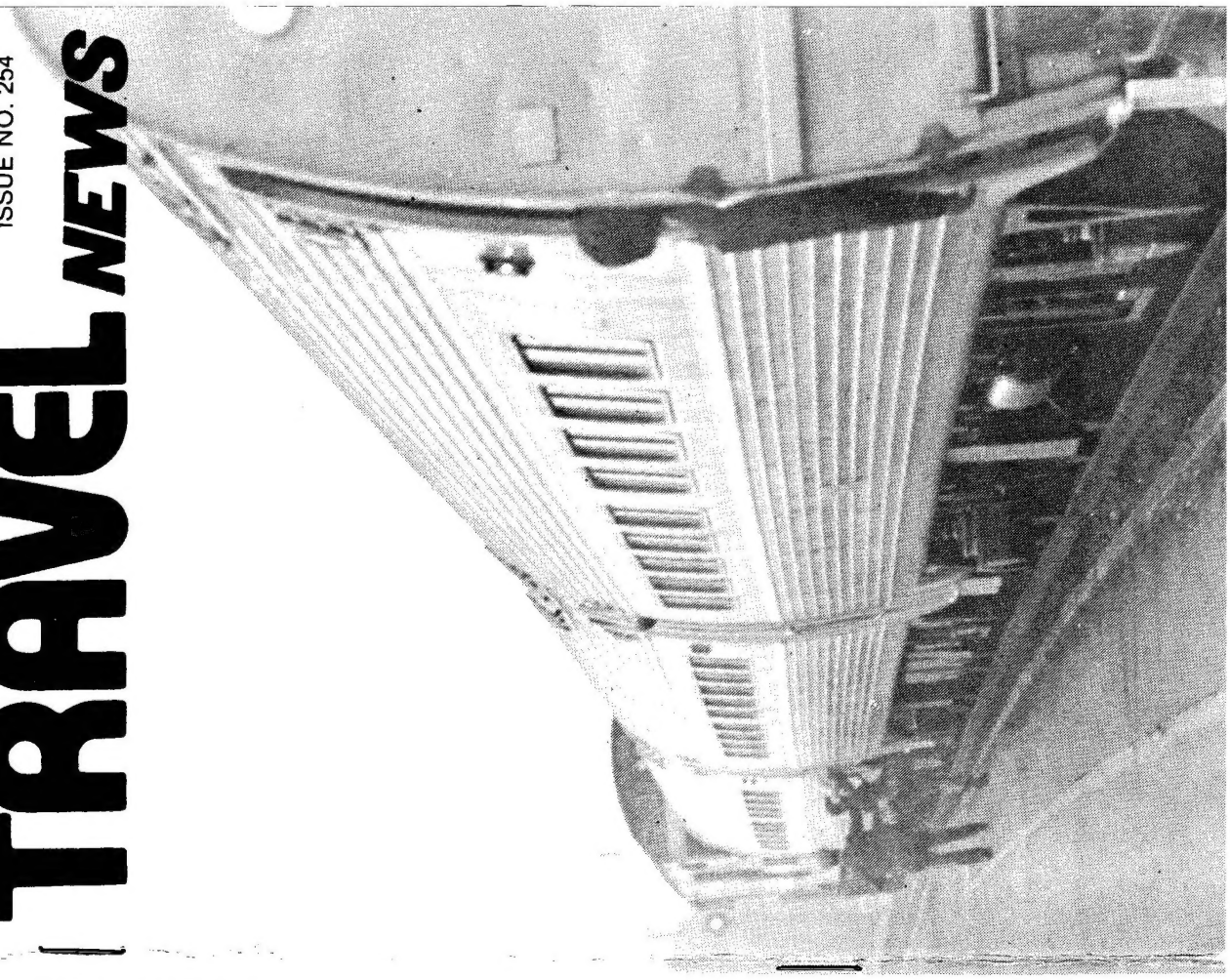

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LETTERS

The last two issues of RTN have contained a pair of related news items that seem to require further explanation: the Amtrak Board's authorization of $575,000 for a study of the feasibility of connecting the West Side freight line with Penn Station, and the FRA/New York DOT decision to spend $700,000 on a study of the Empire Corridor. What does all that money buy? Assuming a $40,000 annual salary for an experienced civil engineer, the West Side study would employ 14 engineers full time for a year, while the Corridor project would employ 17. I can't imagine what they could all spend their time on after the first few months, and it would take a lot of expense account lunches to soak up all that cash.

Seriously: why do such immense amounts of money get spent on the generation of reports? It's not that Amtrak can't find a use for it elsewhere.

Tom Nelligan
Somerville, Massachusetts

I enjoyed Walt Stringer's article, "The Rio Grande: A Trip to Treasure" (RTN 249). However, I have never seen any ridership figures, and would appreciate any information which RTN can find out. The reason is that I have tried on two occasions to make a reservation on the train. The last time was in August 1982, when I tried to get a reservation on an early October train. I received a letter that the train was "completely sold out." I happened to mention this to a "railfan" travel agent who said that he hears this

(continued on page 23)

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CORRECTION: In issue no. 252, the issue number given on page 2 was incorrectly printed as "Vol. 12, No. 15" instead of "Vol. 12, No. 16." The issue numbers given on the front cover were correct.

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Published twice monthly by Message Media, P. O. Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709. Subscription $19.00 per year; single copy 80¢. Overseas and institutional rates on request. STAFF: James Russell, Editor. Paul Rayton, Editor-at-Large. Regional Correspondents: Peter Putnam Bretz, Southern California; Jack Ferry, Illinois; Adron Hall, Mississippi; Kenneth Maylath, Maryland; Peter Roehm, Massachusetts.

ON THE COVER

After an announcement only hours before that the train would run, the first Caltrans Oxnard-Los Angeles commuter train, on its early morning southbound run, makes its stop at Glendale and prepares for the last short leg of the journey into L.A. Union Station. The train uses leased Amtrak equipment--P30 engines and Amfleet cars. The complete story of the train startup appears starting on page 12. Photo by Paul Rayton. (Date: Oct 18.)

(Rear cover:) A photo runby on the Great Northwest Rail Excursion of Oct 9-10. The all-Superliner & Hi-level train posed on Oct 9 at a spot east of The Dalles Dam on the Columbia River, on the Union Pacific. Photo by Gene Hines.

★ CRITICS HIT REPORT ON SHELBYVILLE LINE

The joint DOT-Amtrak report on the extension of the HOOSIER STATE to Cincinnati via Shelbyville has appeared. (The report is said to be a joint one only in the title; in the report proper there are differences between the two authoring agencies.) The National Association of Railroad Passengers quickly criticized the report for "carefully worded negativism and narrow scope." Of particular irritation to NARP was its failure to even consider how the CARDINAL would benefit from re-routing thru Indianapolis, and the failure to draw any conclusions from the report's statement that Amtrak could expect about half a million dollars in track use payments from Conrail local and thru freight service on the Shelbyville line if it was upgraded. In a letter to DOT Secretary Lewis, NARP President John Martin urged Lewis to support improvement of the Shelbyville line, in spite of the report (which was signed by Graham Claytor and by the deputy FRA administrator.

NARP distributed copies of the letter, along with a covering news release to reporters from Indiana, Chicago, Charleston, Huntington and Ashland. NARP said that increased pressure from legislators and other public officials offers the only hope of changing Lewis's mind. On Oct 23 the Indianapolis Star reported objections of both NARP and Indiana Governor Orr on the report. At an Oct 20 news conference in Washington, after a private meeting with Secretary Lewis, Gov. Orr said that "the preservation of this line and its use for both passenger and freight service is a priority for Indiana's transportation system and the state's economic well-being."

★ AMTRAK ANNOUNCES HISTORIC ENGINEERS' PACT, DINING CAR SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Amtrak President Graham Claytor held his first news conference on Oct 26 at Amtrak's Washington headquarters, and he announced the signing of an historic contract with the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. The signing took place in Philadelphia that same afternoon. By the terms of the contract, BLE engineers who now work for Conrail in the NE Corridor and who will become Amtrak employees on Jan 1, 1983, according to Congressional mandate, will work under a new contract by which they will be paid on an hourly pay basis only. The old method of payment on the basis of days and miles will be gone forever. The new contract will improve the engineers' working conditions as well as save Amtrak money, Claytor said. They will make the same pay as now, but will work more hours for it. In one instance, the new pay basis will be phased in over a 3-year period: for NY-Washington engineers who now earn four days' pay in a single roundtrip, they will have three days of work added to their work schedules on Jan 1, another two days on Jan 1, 1984, and two more on Jan 1, 1985. About 250 engineers will be hired by Amtrak. Talks are still underway with the United Transportation Union.

Dining car changes were announced by Claytor at his Oct 26 news conference.

(continued on page 20)

RAIL CANADA

TORONTO-NEW YORK overnight train is not now being actively pursued by Amtrak, according to reliable reports.

NEW HOPE FOR upgrading VIA Rail passenger service in Western Canada has arisen from a meeting of public officials and consumer group representatives held in Edmonton on Oct 23. The Alberta branch of Transport 2000 hosted the meeting, with representatives from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan in attendance. Three alternative schedules were approved for transmission to the Federal government, all designed to generate more revenue than the existing lightly patronized service. The concepts are based on the experience of the former SUPER CONTINENTAL and the existing group of fragmented "intercity" services. A tri-weekly train, (THE COURIER) would run Montreal and Toronto to Winnipeg. Another train, (THE YELLOWHEAD) would run daily Winnipeg to Edmonton and (under another alternative) on to Kamloops, where it would connect with a daily Kamloops-Vancouver train. The proposals are being sent to Trudeau and Pepin.

MACLEAN'S MAGAZINE PUBLISHED a major feature article on VIA in its Oct 11 issue. The article was not at all sympathetic to the rail cuts of last November. It pictures the Liberals as penny-wise and pound-foolish for discontinuing trains and substituting buses which are inferior, and for spending for airports. It quotes some critics who said that air service was so expensive now that it could be used only by politicians and by businessmen on an expense account. A key problem remains Jasper, which reported a $10 million decline in business with the SUPER CONTINENTAL removed. (One RTN reader reported he traveled to Vancouver in August on a 24-car CANADIAN, which carried two full diners--surely evidence that enough traffic exists, despite the recession, to fill two daily trains, one on the CN route via Jasper and the other on the CP Rail route via Banff).

VANCOUVER, B.C. SUN editorialized in early October for inauguration of ski trains on the British Columbia Railway connecting North Vancouver with the Whistler ski resort area as a means of reducing highway fatalities on the N. Vancouver-Squamish highway during winter bad weather periods.

GOVERNMENT TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURES are the subject of a comparative study released Sep 29 by Transport 2000. The study shows that Federal expenditures have consistently favoured air and highway transportation over rail passenger service. During the decade 1970-1980 expenditures have averaged $513 per taxpayer for air, $689 for road, and only $158 for rail passenger service. In 1980 alone, even with increased amounts going to rail, the subsidy per passenger was $27.70 for air and only $13.26 for rail. The figures, reports T-2000, "demonstrate the imbalance in federal transportation priorities and the reason why our rail passenger system has decayed. The federal ministries are responsible for our impoverished rail passenger system because of the higher subsidy levels to competing and more costly modes of transportation, air and road, versus the potentially very efficient rail passenger mode." Authors of the study are Erwin Roy, Jean-Pierre Dagenais and Marie-France Poklukar.

VANCOUVER-NEW WESTMINSTER automated light rapid transit system work is progressing, and is expected to cost nearly $700 million. The Social Credit government of Bill Bennett, which has vigorously pursued the project, continues to drop in the public polls. An election is expected soon, and the ALRT project could very well be scrapped if New Democrat Party candidates are elected. NDP legislators have vigorously criticized the project on the basis of cost and unproven technology.

CP'S WEST ISLAND LINE was officially integrated with the Montreal Urban Community's transit network on Oct 1, ending a 3-year train service battle. Quebec Transport Minister Michel Clair gave his blessing to the plan at an inaugural ceremony at Windsor Station on that date.

WHITE PASS & YUKON Railway (featured in an article in RTN 248) closed down at the end of September due to recession conditions. Its biggest winter customer, the Cyprus Anvil Mining Corp's lead-zinc mine in Faro has been shut down since last June due to poor market conditions, and recently extended the shutdown until next spring. The mine is a subsidiary of Dome Petroleum, which was rescued from a spectacular bankruptcy in early October by intervention of the Federal government. Mine officials would like to bypass the narrow-gauge railway (built in the 1898 gold rush), which carries ore to ships at Skagway, due to high freight rates, but apparently are sympathetic to the line's financial problems. Yukon officials have asked Ottawa for a Federal subsidy to keep the rail line from going under.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

ORLANDO'S SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR will have an 18-month project, using buses, to test the demand for public transit in the crowded Florida corridor, which connects downtown Orlando, the Orlando International Airport and Walt Disney World theme park. UMTA announced Oct 25 that it will help fund the test project, contributing $420,000, while the city and Florida DOT together put up $160,000. The Reagan Administration departed from its own policy of not funding new transit systems in approving the test grant. It explained the departure as due to the uniqueness of the proposed system, which is to use private capital to build a light-rail system. While the final system will be rail, buses are being used to gauge the public's acceptance of transit service on the route.

CALGARY IS PROGRESSING on construction of a new light-rail project to extend from downtown (where it will use existing rail) to the northeast area of the city. Continuous controversy over details of the proposed Northwest line led officials to move ahead on the Northeast line instead. The Northwest line, if ever built, will serve hospitals, shopping areas and the University of Calgary campus.

ONTARIO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT announced in mid-October that it plans to replace the GO Transit Lakeshore commuter trains with an Advanced light rail transit system. This ALRT (not to be confused with the linear-induction motor Automated Light Rail Transit project now underway in the Toronto suburb of Scarborough) will be built in stages. First will be routes from the east and west ends of the GO Transit Lakeshore line; from Pickering to Oshawa in the east, and Oakville to Hamilton on the west. Later, a new line, connecting the Toronto airport with Scarborough and the far edges of the GO system, will be built. The price tag is $2.9 billion at today's prices. Officials say the project is necessary because the 50,000 daily passengers will rise to 100,000 in five years and 250,000 per day in 20 years. The decision on the new system was made largely because of frustrations in dealing with CN over proposed extensions of the existing service.

NEW YORK'S MTA was handed a report on Oct 18 from the Permanent Citizens Advisory Committee, which urged four measures on it to increase productivity and "save millions." The measures are: Pass-Reader Fare Collection System, One Person Train Operation, Signal Modernization, and Articulated Buses. The 58-page report finds that investment of $8.5 million in a pass-reader (magnetic card) system could save $25 million annually in labor costs, reduce fare evasion, simplify revenue collection, increase data collection, and eliminate lengthy lines at token booths. Signal Modernization refers to resignalling most of the 94 track miles specified by the 5-Year Capital Plan with cab signals, to save $50-$100 million, improve running times, and save wear and tear on the tracks.Articulated buses would cut the bus fleet by 42% and save almost $200 million annually, the report said.

NEW YORK'S MTA has cancelled plans to borrow $126 million from Japan to finance its purchase of Kawasaki subway cars. MTA instead will raise the money for the 325 cars thru the sale of bonds.

STEAMING ACROSS VIRGINIA

The 611 Inaugural

by Jack M. Turner

SAT., SEP. 4: Finding Norfolk & Western's Woodall Road Station in Lynchburg proved no small feat. The station had stood idle since Amtrak curtailed the HILL-TOPPER, and even area businesses seemed unable to provide directions. Once found, the station platform proved crowded, and an air of expectancy hung over the waiting mass. Within minutes of schedule, N&W 611 appeared around a curve with a 15-car train in tow. My brother Steve and I boarded the third coach, Roanoke NRHS Chapter's "John M. Hancock," a former N&W, Wabash and B&M car. Soon the 611 eased its train from the station, gaining speed with the grace of a thorobred racehorse.

Shortly it became obvious that word had spread about "the J's" inaugural trip from Roanoke to Norfolk, as waving spectators appeared at every crossing, overpass and backyard. The historic town of Appomattox was bursting with photographers, some clinging to CTC towers and others atop boxcars, recording the "Centennial Limited's" brief stop. Meanwhile, dozens of vehicles paced the train on parallel U.S. 460 including a van with photographer hanging out an open cargo door and another with a man protruding from a sunroof shooting movies of the train all the way to Suffolk.

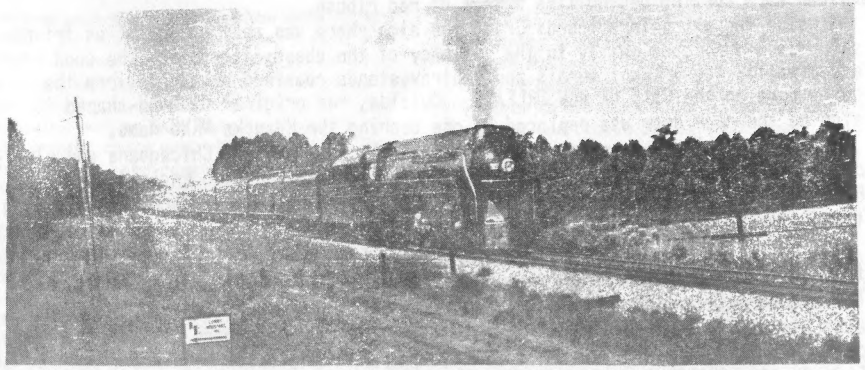
A photo runby afforded the first good look at the trailing cars, as the crowded vestibules provided only a passing glance. The N&W and Roanoke Chapter had done it up right, as every car, with the exception of two stainless Southern coaches, was adorned in N&W's classy Tuscan red with yellow piping and lettering. Open-window and air conditioned N&W and Southern coaches, ex-Central of Georgia combine "Fort Mitchell" and a former BN dorm-diner made up the major portion of the train, with N&W sleeper "Hollins College" and ex-IC tavern observation "Mardi Gras" bringing up the rear.

The N&W's belt line was followed for 45 minutes thru the tiny hamlet of Meherrin and into Burkeville where the northerly line via Farmville was rejoined. Within minutes our service stop at Crewe was reached, allowing a chance to view the cab of the 611. The planned 2-hour stop was shortened to 1¼ hours to make up lost time and as the train slipped out of the Crewe yard, the senior citizens aboard our car became alarmed to see the young man who had been sitting behind them still standing on the platform with no look of distress despite missing the train.

N&W's reputation as a coal carrier soon was upheld as a pair of westbound empty coal trains were passed at speed within a 15-minute span. N&W President Bob Claytor soon made his way thru our car, accepting congratulatory handshakes for the fine excursion. In no time Petersburg was reached and the young man left at Crewe rejoined the train, having hitched a ride, much to the relief of our older passengers. The advertised "Race to Tidewater" let the 611 show its stuff, and it responded with some 60mph running on the straight N&W mainline thru tiny Waverly and Wakefield and on across the Great Dismal Swamp, reaching Norfolk just ahead of the scheduled 6pm.

Thus far the trip had run like clockwork. However, our chartered shuttle bus to the motel got lost, taking its riders on a 45-minute tour of Norfolk. Perhaps one passenger summed it up best by declaring "Murphy's Law is in effect." How right he was! Overnight as the train was being turned, the locomotive derailed its drive wheels, a fact which adorned the next morning's newspaper.

SUNDAY, SEP 5: Yard crews had worked all night, successfully rerailing 611; however, one eilemma remained: it could not be turned due to the sharp curvature of a recently rebuilt horn track. As its passengers looked on, one final effort to turn the massive locomotive was made, using a turntable, but this effort also failed. Shortly, the call was made for diesel power and the stranded loco was left behind. Trackside viewers of the train looked puzzled by the presence of N&W die-

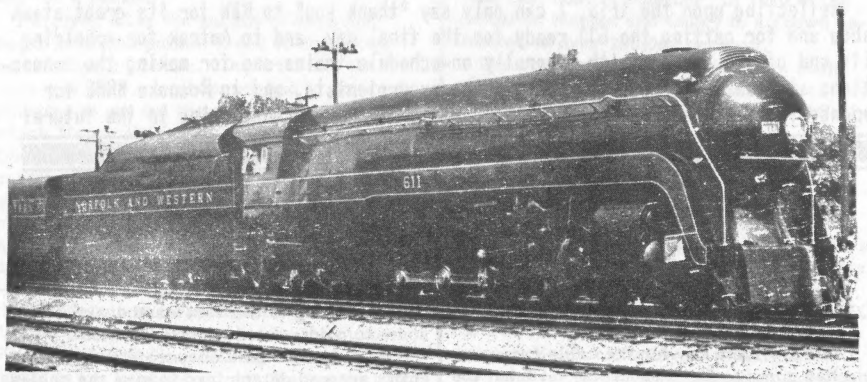


(Above:) N&W steam locomotive 611 highballs on mainline photo runby east of Bedford, Virginia on Labor Day trip from Roanoke to Alexandria.
(Below:) N&W J-class 611 pauses at Crewe, Virginia for servicing on its first day--on the run from Norfolk to Roanoke. Photos by the author.

sels 8055 and 8056 rather than the J, many simply shaking their heads. On board, most passengers seemed to accept the situation as "one of those things." Meanwhile, the engineer did his best to make the ride interesting with fast running and frequent whistle blowing.

Just after a quick stop at Petersburg, word came from the Roanoke Chapter's Carol Jensen that 611 was en route to Roanoke, towed backwards behind a diesel with a 20mph speed restriction. This information plus a spectacular runby at High Bridge ("If only for 611 now!") made for lifted spirits as Monday's trip should be behind steam. On thru Farmville and into Lynchburg where my brother would detrain and drive back to Charlottesville for school on Monday. We now had made up an hour of the 1:40 lost trying to turn 611 in Norfolk. The setting sun and cool temperature made a beautiful crossing of the Blue Ridge Mountains and into Roanoke at 7:20pm.

MONDAY, SEP 6: As I left the Day's Inn, a mile from the depot, it was obvious that 611 was ready, as its whistle echoed thru the valley as she moved into place. Precisely at 9am Roanoke was left behind, 611 belching black smoke as the Blue Ridge grade was tackled. Despite riding 15 cars and two tenders behind the locomotive, I still found cinders raining down upon me as the Dutch door was put to good use. A photo runby in a farming area near Bedford made up for much of the previous day's disappointment, with an abundance of black smoke pouring from the J and a string of



Tuscan cars curving behind like a trail of red ribbon.

Inside the extra-fare "Mardi Gras" the atmosphere was most congenial as friendships seemed to come easily in the intimacy of the observation car. The wood-panelled walls, New Orleans murals and ashtray stands remained unchanged from the car's days on the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS. Outside, the original diamond-shaped IC sign on the rear door was replaced by one bearing the Roanoke NRHS name.

A wide variety of passengers were aboard this day--several Chicagoans and Floridians plus contingents from Iowa, Delaware, California and even England! Railfan Bob Bader of Miami served as car host and bar attendant in the "Mardi Gras", doing the job most capably.

An unlikely-looking connection at Lynchburg led the "Centennial Limited" from the N&W to the Southern mainline much in the manner of the pre-Amtrak TENNESSEAN. Two high trestles and one tunnel later it was time for a service stop at Monroe, also a stop for the CRESCENT. North of Monroe the 611 once more displayed awesome power by easily winding the train along the hilly route which requires a pair of F40s for the CRESCENT--cinders falling so thickly that vestibule riding was useless.

We reached Charlottesville at 2:45 and many passengers detrained at the former Southern station where the C&O crosses the Southern; buses would take these riders back to Lynchburg and Roanoke. Moments later, a final photo runby would be made at scenic Montpelier Station, a small burg whose restored train station now serves as post office.

Meanwhile, inexplicable slow orders on every bridge north of this point pushed the train further behind schedule. With an unscheduled water stop at Manassas, it now seemed questionable whether passengers for the southbound CRESCENT at Alexandria would make it in time. This problem was soon made academic by a most interesting transmission heard over the scanners: Amtrak President Graham Claytor was aboard the excursion and called the Southern dispatcher with word to hold the CRESCENT for our arrival. This brought looks of happy astonishment from the 20 railfans in the "Mardi Gras'" rear section, and prompted a round of applause when Mr. Claytor himself stopped by to say "hello." Notified that there were also several aboard wishing to make connections to the north, Mr. Claytor soon was heard again on the airways requesting the TIDEWATER be held at Alexandria. As the 611 extra pulled into Alexandria's small station, at 6:47pm, the holiday-operated TIDEWATER waited on the adjacent track. No doubt passengers already aboard were surprised to see a steam train pull up next to them!

As the CRESCENT rolled out of Alexandria at 7:31pm (held until Alexandria's tracks were cleared of 611 extra and the TIDEWATER), a seat was found in coach 4741, then dinner sought before the diner filled up. Joining me for dinner were Steve and Marlee Warner of Atlanta, whom I had met on the steam trip. Each of us had the newly-introduced prime rib dinner and found it excellent. The dark Virginia countryside raced by and all too soon it was time to bid goodbye to my friends and get off at Charlottesville at 9:25pm.

Reflecting upon the trip, I can only say "thank you" to N&W for its great steam show and for getting the 611 ready for the final day, and to Amtrak for upholding its end of the bargain with generally on-schedule trains and for making the connections at Alexandria possible for all the excursionists, and to Roanoke NRHS for sponsoring and staffing the excursion--we look for more good trips in the future!

Cable Car Carnival

by Glenn Lee

"....There is plenty of excitement on the Hyde Street Grip!"

--Gelett Burgess

The Very Last Day for the cable car system had come to San Francisco--at least the system as we have known it, with some components dating to the 1906 earthquake, and some to points more distant than that.

San Francisco as a corporate and civic entity seemed determined to give the cables a good farewell sendoff on Tuesday, Sep 21, both in an effort to praise the little cars which for 109 years have been a symbol of The City, and perhaps also in an effort to shake away the ghosts of doubt plaguing the reconstruction period which is to last 20 months, ending 6am June 1, 1984. Perhaps the matter rests entirely in the hands of the fates which have repeatedly kept the cable system from extinction since early 1947.

I arrived in downtown San Francisco about 8am to find that the cable cars would not be in operation until early afternoon. Each of the 34 cars which had been "adopted" by a corporate sponsor was being decorated in the Washington-Mason carhouse in preparation for a cable car parade, to be held 11am-1pm both on the east-west California St. line and the north-south Powell St. route, with a reviewing stand established at the corner of Powell and California presided over by Mayor Dianne Feinstein, singer Tony Bennett (whose world-famed composition "I left my heart in San Francisco" has been translated into 43 languages) and other local luminaries.

The time remaining gave me a chance to wander, and my junketing included a walk up the southern waterfront, taking photos of the fireboat "Phoenix"; inspecting the lobby of the Rincon Annex Post Office on Mission St., which might soon become a waiting room for Caltrain commute runs to the Peninsula, a revived DEL MONTE, a San Francisco section of the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA, and perhaps even someday a restored COAST DAYLIGHT.

I also went upstairs in the Ferry Building to inspect the tiny slice remaining of the former "Great Hall" which once housed the great relief map of the State of California, and prowled thru the Embarcadero Center and into the temporary new home of the cable car museum (second floor at the southeast corner of Clay and Drumm Sts.) before taking a No. 1 trolley coach to the crest of Nob Hill. From there it was only a short walk down Mason St. to the Washington-Mason carhouse under warm, clear, sunny skies. A perfect day for a parade!

I arrived after the parade of cars had begun from the pullout track on the upper level of the carhouse. Departure of the cars was slow, as shopmen had to do much shunting to put out the cars in the order in which Mayor Feinstein had expected them. One by one they arrived on the street, each carrying a festive load of passengers represenging the corporate sponsors, some (including Standard Oil of California) of which had donated up to $1 million to the cable reconstruction fund to "adopt" a car.

While a crowd of about 3000 gathered at the California and Powell intersection, by far the best place seemed to be the curb at Washington and Mason, the great cable power house in the background dominating the scene of those paying homage to the cables. Strung across the powerhouse walls were banners reading "We Shall Return," far below the imposing inscription "Ferries and Cliff House Railway - 1887" near the roofline of the red brick structure.

Some of the cars were imaginatively decorated; and others not so well done. But thruout ranged a Mardi Gras atmosphere, or perhaps that of Carnival in Rio. The latter feeling was heavily accentuated when a single-end Powell St. car emerged from the barn carrying the scantily-clad men and women of the Corpo Santos Brazilian band, on a grip sponsored by KJAZ radio station. The beat became so intense, even a few moments from the barn, that the old apartment buildings lining Washington St. seemed to vibrate with the Corpo group's music, in sympathetic harmony.

The Corpo Santos musicians rose even higher to the occasion, and the car rocked so badly that nine blocks down the line, at the corner of O'Farrell and Powell, it derailed, momentarily halting festivities. A big Muni Railway wrecker truck came to the rescue and moments later all was running smoothly.

Or at least almost all.... Altho each car seemed to be grinning and groaning at the same time, and altho each seemed to be saying in finest San Francisco tradition:

"Oh dear me, I hope I'm able,
all day long to keep my cable!"

--the car accompanied by the University of California marching band lost its grip northbound on the steep grade between Pine and California Sts., and slipped back down the hill. On the second try, grit, determination and the special spirit that seems to smile on cable cars won out, and the car crested the hill triumphantly.

At the summit of the cable world, California and Powell Sts., Tony Bennett gave a stirring rendition of his "I left my heart in San Francisco," thus joining immortal greats from San Francisco's past who also have sung in The City's streets, including opera great Luisa Tetrazzini, who sang "The last rose of summer" in 1910 at the corner of Market and Geary to a crowd estimated at over 100,000 persons.

The corporate sponsors included such major firms as Atari, Bell Telephone, Bechtel Corp., Bank of America, Bank of California, American Airlines, Nissan, Levi Strauss, R. J. Reynolds, United Airlines and a host of others.

When all 34 cars had cleared the barn, there were very few left. Muni had had a fleet of 40 cars--28 single-end Powell cars and 12 double-end California St. cars. One of the California cars has been inoperable for a number of years, and at least one of the Powell cars had been removed a few days earlier for display on a mezzanine roof of the Hyatt Hotel at Stockton and Post.

(Left:) Small Muni signal "tower" at the corner of California and Powell Streets, where the two lines cross.
(Page 11:) Two Powell Street cable cars. Photos by RTN.

The car adopted by the Fairmont Hotel had special appeal to film cultists among cable car buffs--car No. 7, which for many years was known as No. 507. It was on this car that a portion of the movie "Dark Passage" (1947) was filmed, starring Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall. In the famous scene, Bogart jumps from the car and tells Miss Bacall to meet him in Peru. Entire subcultures can spring from such stuff, it seems, and having No. 7 on the street during the Very Last Day seemed to bring the cable car system to a point of being (as they said of the late Lucius Beebe) "bigger than life," a mystic merging of street-present and cultist-unpresent. Surely the ingredients for a big party as the day progressed.

Officials tore their hair and fingered their rosaries, and as one said, "We'll be lucky today if no one is killed." No one was, but it wasn't because the opportunity did not exist.

When the cable car parade and attendant municipal hoopla at California and Powell ended, the cars were turned loose to operate regular service. Mayor Feinstein had announced that no fares would be collected, and tourists and natives alike embraced the little vehicles in a series of massive bear hugs, until each cable car coming or going resembled more a football covered with a swarm of humanity, each a focal point for a bee-like swarm coming and going above the cable slots.

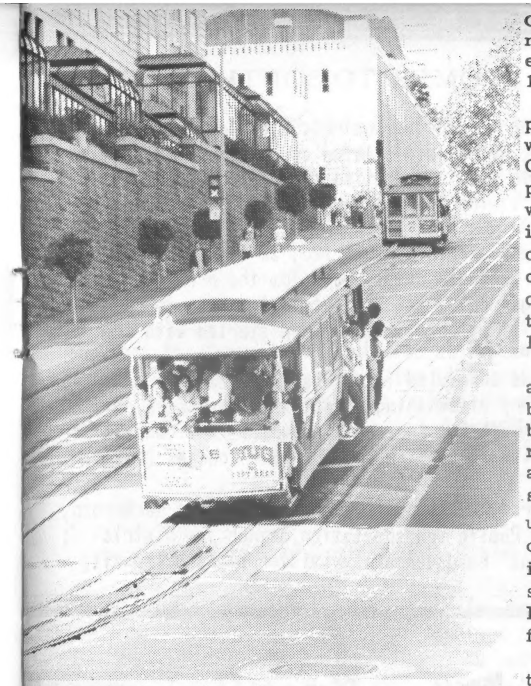
I had lunch in the small Chinese restaurant at the southwest corner of Mason and Jackson Sts.--my last time for a while to sit in the corner and listen to the cable car workers chatter about their life and times. The 34 cars out today were seven more than normally scheduled at peak periods (19 on the two Powell lines and seven on the California line). Aside from that, the crew were discussing where they were to spend their time in "exile." (Some cable car workers were sporting buttons reading: "Cable Car Worker in Exile 1982-1984.) It was to bus garages, driving LRVs in the new Market St. subway, trolley coaches, or something equally sundry.

While some cable car critics charge that high stress and hard work cause nearly a 100% yearly turnover in cable car workers, some love it, and stay on for years. Many praised the cable cars to newsmen, but the best quote surely was that of cable car conductor George Gruning: "Working on a cable car is better than sex." Gruning's statement was a tough act to follow, but surely accepted by a large number of loyal cable system employees whose devotion has helped keep the lines in a reasonable operating condition for the last several years as components nearly 100 years old have become fully depreciated before their very eyes.

For example, Muni officials have been toying with the idea of installing a new, hydraulic-based braking system on the cars. A total of 115 cable workers, including all gripmen but three, signed a petition to the management urging that the idea be dropped. Nevertheless, car #19 operated many trips the last week of cable service loaded with sandbags, and refusing passengers behind "Test Car" signs, doing studies for alteration of the braking systems.

After lunch, it was time for a final stroll over the hills to record the vanishing cable cars on film. I had by this time walked almost the entire distance of the cable car system, but was drawn back to the Hyde St. route, from the carbarn west on Jackson St. to Hyde, and then north along Hyde to Beach St. on the northern waterfront--the Hyde St. that has seemed "So Very San Francisco" thru all the changes of the last several years, and the Hyde St. of the year 1900 that so intrigued Gelett Burgess, engineer turned Bohemian poet, and who contributed so substantially to the lore of the cable car.

At Broadway and Hyde I was stopped by an 80s-ish senior citizen who proclaimed his great love for the cable cars. He was a native of Astoria, Oregon, but said he wouldn't go back. He and his wife lived in an apartment alongside a depression beam,



the noisy rattlers that help keep the cable underground at a point near the foot of a grade. "The sound lulls us to sleep every night," he said. "We just love it."

At Union St. I was met by an old-time college friend outside Swensen's Ice Cream Parlor--the very site where one of President Lyndon Johnson's daughters was ordered off a cable car by a gripman who didn't want ice cream on the seats--while astonished Secret Service agents looked on in disbelief. Across the street, the druggist said that the steam shovels were to get to Union and Hyde in December, 1983 for track removal, and they were bracing for it. But he agreed, with everyone else, that it was an absolute necessity, and that the right thing was being done. Not a bit different from Mayor Feinstein, who had told the crowd at the cable parade that she wasn't a bit sad--that the alternative was a permanent cancellation of all cable car service.

The sunny midday turned into a sunny afternoon as the loaded cars listed by, covered with tourists. Equally visible were large numbers of photographers on the streets, especially at Hyde and Chestnut and Lombard. Photos of cars cresting the hill at Lombard and Chestnut appeared on many front pages the next day. TV fans will know this section of the Hyde line. It has for years appeared as the opening scene of "San Francisco Beat" or "The Streets of San Francisco." If it is an older double-end car going down the hill when Inspector Greb's black auto comes up, the film was made before 1956. If it's a newer single-end Powell car, the show was made after 1957.

At the base of the hill, by 5pm, my fellow photographer was revving up, while I was wearing down. He wanted to walk over to Columbus Avenue in North Beach to take photos of Mason-Taylor cars on trackage which will be relocated nearer to the curb in the rebuilding project to improve safety on Columbus, a wide street by San Francisco standards. But I was saved by the cranky old cable system, which at 5:24pm ground to a halt due to a defective cable on the Powell-Mason line.

Until recently, Muni operated the Powell and Mason line with two separate cables, but on the last day, as for many months before, it was being operated by one long rope. In the powerhouse, from the observation deck, that rope has appeared very smooth to me, and nearly at the end of its usefulness. As all three lines use cables coming from the same set of winders, having one rope damaged means everything is stopped, including the Hyde and California lines. So now it was time to cut and run for dinner.

The papers next day had a field day with the temporary shutdown. The Chronicle headlined the event "The Last Cable Splice" and ran a front-page photo of three cable workers repairing the damage in time to get the cars back on the road about 9:15pm. The Hyde and California lines, by contrast, were back in service about 6:30pm, after the Powell-Mason rope had been thrown loose from the winding equipment to allow the winding machinery to get going again for the other two lines.

After dinner, we immediately noted a heavy fog rolling in, the first time in several days, and that it was growing chilly fast. We waited perhaps 30 minutes for a #32-Embarcadero bus to go downtown, but they had stopped running at 6pm. Even in the busy Fisherman's Wharf area, there were no signs to warn the visitor about this. The lines for the cable cars were very long, and I was very tired, so it meant the end of the day for me, and a need to return to the home of my host in the East Bay.

***

I am very tired as I board the transbay C bus for the last time during my visit. I would not be up all night until the last car, Bogie's No. 7, pulled into the barn at 4:48am after an extended party, nor would I see the button pushed, halting the old cable winding equipment at 4:55am for the last time. It's a few moments of chatter with my host and then quickly I am fast asleep, and (to use the words of Gelett Burgess again)....

"As the hush of midnight falls upon the Hyde Street Grip."

CALTRAIN COMES TO SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

by Dan Lovegren

For the first time since April 8, 1961, when the last Pacific Electric Red Car ran between Los Angeles and Long Beach, local rail service operated in Southern California on Monday, Oct 18, 1982, with the inauguration of the long-awaited Oxnard commuter trains along the route of the COAST STARLIGHT and SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA.

The first day of operation caught many people by surprise, as it was not known for sure if the service would start on schedule until about 7pm the previous day. But the startup, which came on the target date, Oct 18, culminated over four years of efforts that began in 1978 when the first negotiations were started with the Southern Pacific Railroad.

The first departure, from Oxnard, was scheduled for 5:30am, but came nine minutes late because of the time-honored ceremony of smashing a bottle of champagne on the front coupler of the train by Caltrans Director Adriana Gianturco. The consist of the first train was Amtrak P30 locomotive 714 and Amfleet 84-seat coaches 21197, 21221 and 21269.

Among those on board for the first run, besides Gianturco, were Heinz Heckeroth, Caltrans District; Susan Brown, Chief, Public Transportation Branch for District 7; Matt Paul and Warren Weber from Caltrans' Headquarters' Division of Mass Transit; and Baxter Ward, the former Los Angeles County Supervisor whom most people credit for initiating the idea for a Los Angeles-Oxnard commuter rail service. Also on board were NARP Directors Robert Glover, Richard Tower, Daniel Lovegren and George Falcon. No Amtrak people were present, since this is a service funded entirely by the State of California contracting directly with the SP, with equipment being leased from Amtrak. (The EL CAMINO equipment purchased by L.A. County years ago for this service is not being used as it is steam-heated and not in very good condition.)

We left the first stop, the Simi Valley station, at 6:20am, 13 minutes late, and left the Panorama City station at 6:50am, 14 minutes late. One interesting point was in evidence at these two stations: construction of them did not begin until October 9, just nine days before the service started, and the concrete for the platforms was not poured until the weekend of Oct 15-17, just days before service started! Temporary lights were still in use when the train pulled in.

Glendale was reached at 7:08am, 12 minutes late, with a final arrival in Los Angeles at 7:24am, 14 minutes late. A podium was erected at the L.A. station, and a number of local officials stepped up and said a few words about the new service, among whom were: California Assemblemen Chuck Embrecht and Gary Hart; Ventura County Supervisor John Flynn, and Simi Valley Mayor Elton Galletly. The second train arrived only a few minutes tardy.

We left Los Angeles on the return trip 8 minutes late at 4:37pm and arrived Oxnard at 6:20pm, 10 minutes late.

There are presently two trains a day, Monday thru Friday, excluding holidays. Their schedules are shwon below.

Negotiations are underway to lease bi-level commuter equipment from Chicago to replace the existing Amfleet cars. The replacement is expected to occur in November.

Six additional stops are under construction and are planned to be opened in Feb, 1983. They are Camarillo, Moorpark, Chatsworth, Northridge, Burbank and Burbank Airport. Weekly and monthly commutation tickets are to go on sale soon, offering discounts of up to 55% off the regular fares. Regular fares to

MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY EXCEPT HOLIDAYS

MORNING READ DOWN			Effective October 18, 1982			EVENING READ UP	
102	104		Train Number	Zone		101	103
5:30a	6:40a	Lv	Oxnard-Amtrak Station	7	Ar	6:09p	7:21p
(A)	(A)	Lv	Camarillo	6	Lv	(A)	(A)
(A)	(A)	Lv	Moorpark	5	Lv	(A)	(A)
6:07a	7:17a	Lv	Simi Valley	4	Lv	5:32p	6:44p
(A)	(A)	Lv	Chatsworth	3	Lv	(A)	(A)
(A)	(A)	Lv	Northridge	3	Lv	(A)	(A)
6:36a	7:46a	Lv	Panorama City	2	Lv	5:03p	6:15p
(A)	(A)	Lv	Burbank Airport	2	Lv	(A)	(A)
(A)	(A)	Lv	Burbank	2	Lv	(A)	(A)
6:56a	8:06a	Lv	Glendale Amtrak Station	1	Lv	4:43p	5:55p
7:10a	8:20a	Ar	Los Angeles Union Station	1	Lv	4:29p	5:41p

Note A – Trains will stop at this station at a date to be announced

GROWING UP in Southern California as a railfan was to live in the best of all possible worlds. Why, you had steam AND diesels, freight AND passenger trains, streamliners AND heavyweights, the Red Cars AND the Yellow Cars in standard AND narrow gauge! A few gallons of 29¢ gasoline in your jalopy, and you were off to the mountain passes or the lonely desert—or the Sixth and Main Street station for the best trainwatching in the world!

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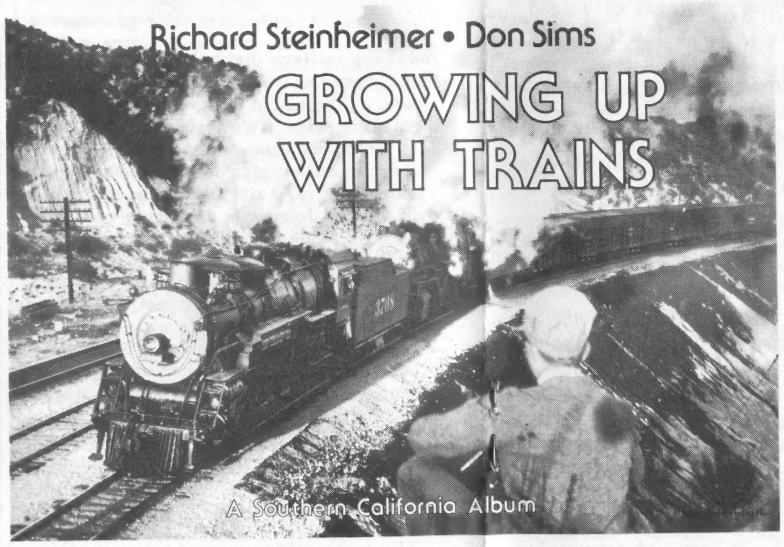

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The first train pulls into Glendale in the dark, early morning fog. Consist of the second train was: P30 engine 707; Amcoaches 21258, 21267, 21268. The latter train was pictured on the front page of the L.A. Times on Oct 19. Paul Rayton.

★ ★ ★

EXCERPTS FROM THE COMMENTS OF CALTRANS DIRECTOR ADRIANA GIANTURCO AT THE INAUGURAL RUN OF THE OXNARD-LOS ANGELES CALTRAIN SERVICE:

The train ride we just took from Oxnard--with stops in Simi, Panorama City, and Glendale was truly an historic event and, at the same time, it marks the beginning of a new era for transportation in the Los Angeles Region.

...First, this is the first local rail service to be provided in the L.A. area since the demise of the Red Car system, which had its last run on Apr 8, 1961--21 years ago. As for commuter rail service--that is, rail service designed specifically to take people to and from their jobs--the last time that kind of rail service existed in L.A. was during World War II, some 40 years ago. And finally, the establishment of this L.A.-Oxnard train service marks the first time that the California Public Utilities Commission has compelled the initiation of new train service any place in this state, an order which the PUC issued, at our request, on the grounds of public convenience and necessity.

Getting the service started has been a long and very difficult battle for us, and I want to take this occasion to publicly commend the many Caltrans employees who worked ceaselessly to bring it about. Our attorneys ran thru a maze of legal hurdles and challenges with skill, intelligence and tenacity. Our mass transit people--in both Sacramento and L.A.--put together the actual service, dealing with a seemingly endless array of technical problems and complex institutional obstacles. Our engineering and construction staff, who were pressed into service at virtually the last moment, performed a herculean task and managed to build platform stations and parking areas in a time period which has got to have set a record in its own right--an incredible nine days. In all this, we were, of course, aided by many indificuals and groups--too many for me to begin to list them today. I would, however, like to recognize two people who really got the ball rolling on this whole thing--former L.A. County Supervisor Baxter Ward and his most able deputy Doug Ring--as well as Mike Sedell, from the city of Simi--who gave us back-up help on the project from the very beginning...

The surface system which we are confident will emerge in the next few years will include commuter lines running not just to the Valley, but south to Orange County and east to Riverside and San Bernardino. As a second element, it will include light rail lines in the medians of several freeways, including the Century

Freeway where we are already planning to have light rail in operation simultaneous with the freeway itself. Third, it will incorporate rail lines on certain portions of the old Pacific Electric rights-of-way, such as the line from Long Beach to L.A.

We at Caltrans are delighted to have started this first L.A. rail project and we look forward to helping to set up the rest of the system in the years to come.

RIDING THE METROLINERS AND RAIL TRANSIT CARS OF PHILADELPHIA

by Walt Stringer

On a recent 9-day swing to Philadelphia, Washington and Knoxville I had the chance to ride two Metroliners, as well as get caught up on rail matters in the Philadelphia area. During the trip the BLE strike occurred, but it had little effect in Philly other than cancelling the CAPITOL LIMITED (on the B&O) and forcing Amtrak to run the Washington section of trains 40-41 on the NE Corridor to 30th Street, as it used to do. This caused #41 about a 45-min delay daily.

My first Metroliner ride was between Ardmore and Philadelphia on Harrisburg-New York train #44, the BIG APPLE. Most Amtrak 600-series Harrisburg trains are 3-car sets of rebuilt Metroliners, with an occasional 4-car set. Coaches, cafes, and clubs are mixed freely, since the interiors are all 2&2 coach seating. The Metros are slow and run late, especially on schedules with numerous stops. SEPTA and Amtrak recently decided to cancel all ticket arrangements on the Paoli line, so I paid $2.35 for my 7-mile, 11-minute ride, versus $1.50 for a SEPTA Bargain Ticket.

One first-time item: this train has a working snack bar, so for the first time after hundreds of rides between Ardmore and Philly I was able to ride a train with food service. Never thought it would happen!

The train, consisting of six Metroliners (two 3-car sets coupled), arrived four minutes late in a cloud of brakeshoe smoke and promptly overshot the platform. I was directed to board the fourth car (fifth and sixth cars out of service Harrisburg-Phil, in service Phil-NY), and walked thru the half-full train to the lead car, with the open snack bar.

The car interiors were somewhat worn but okay--basically like Amfleet. The conductor was an old Harrisburg Division buddy, and I was promptly ushered up front where the engineer was cramped into the small cab, hitting the deadman alerter each time it went off and telling me how long it took to reach the 76-mph mark between Overbrook and 52nd Street. Obviously most of these guys would like to have their Silverliners back.

Philadelphia, being one of the last cities to make changes in its transit system, is now finally modernizing the SEPTA system (next Jan. 1, commuter rail will also be full part of SEPTA). Here is a brief look at each segment:

SEPTA City Subways: Broad St. Subway short of cars, reduced schedule, one train of new experimental cars runs 5-6 days per week--catch it if you can; Market-Frankfort El has some cars refurbished and identified as SEPTA Blue Line.

SEPTA Media/Sharon Hill Trolleys: New Kawasaki double-enders are running all weekend service and much weekday also, with Brill and St. Louis cars also used in rush hours. I rode Kawasakis from 69th St. to Drexel Hill Jct and back; cars have 2&2 seating (one side faces front, other back), blue cloth seats, very comfortable ride with air suspension and air brakes. SEPTA currently is auctioning off at least five of the older Red Arrow Brill-Liners and Master Units, as well as St. Louis double-enders. By mid-October, all service was expected to be Kawasaki and Brill. St. Louis cars are to be sold (minimum bid $200, FOB 69th St.).

SEPTA Norristown Line: Three Brill Bullets repainted into red-white-blue scheme, all Bullets now equipped with PA system. All stations being equipped with PA; major trackwork being done. During the week of Sep 12 two Villanova students were fatally injured by the last inbound Norriwtown car at 1:00am. They were painting sorority letters on a bridge--an old Villanova practice.

SEPTA City Trolleys: The West Philly subway-surface lines, based at the new Elmwood depot, are nearly all Kawasaki, tho I did see several PCC cars on the #10 Overbrook. Routes 23 and 50 apparently are buses now, and the North Philly lines may also be bus. Route 23, Americals longest trolley route, has been severed by construction of the Center City Commuter Tunnel, which is preceding well.

Conrail-NY Transit Seashore Lines: No train service is run at present. Cape May/Ocean City was suspended at different times in summer, 1981, Atlantic City in summer

'82, all due to heavy speed restrictions imposed by FRA track inspections. Substitute buses are operated. Ten RDCs (ex-PRSL and CNJ) are stored at Atlantic City in various stages of decay. No definitive word on Atlantic City-Philly hi-speed corridor operator.

PATCO: Continues to do well, increasing marketing activities to boost ridership. All new Vickers cars in service. Only possible expansion at present is the Berlin one on the ex-PRSL main, and it is not likely, due to funding situation.

Ex-RDG Commuter Rail: Still runs a variety of equipment, but RDCs to Bethlehem, Reading-Pottsville and Newark are long gone.

Ex-PC Commuter Rail: Suburban Station has a new platform--Track 2--that is handsome and well-lit. It and Track 3 will reportedly be used as thru tracks for the Center City Commuter Tunnel. The Media-West Chester segment of the Media Line is currently converted to buses for several reasons. Equipment seems to be largely GE Silver IVs--Budd Silvers are stored at 30th Street and/or Paoli. Also stored or kept at 30th are several E60s and quite a few Metroliners and Jersey Arrows.

Amtrak: 30th Street Station is looking good and very busy; lounges for both NY and Washington Metroliner passengers have been created, complete with check-in booth and consist lineups, so you know where each type of car is, and whether or not it is a smoker. I saw the PENNSYLVANIAN three separate times--each consist was F40, Amcoach, Amcafe. Did not see the BROADWAY. Saw one train 88 with engine 958, Amfleet II coaches and lounge.

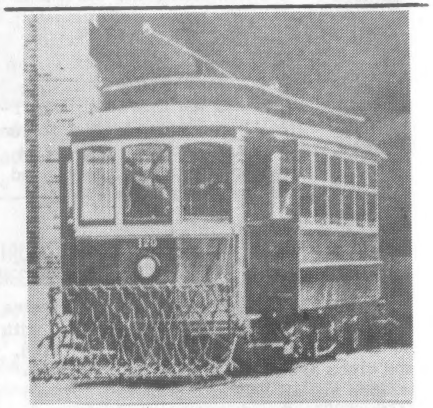
Airport Hi-Speed Line: Proceeding slowly, but many fixed facilities are installed. Phila Airport segment has track, station and catenary; the ex-RDG Darby Branch has catenary poles also.

Delaware Ave (Penn's Landing) Trolley: Buckingham Valley Trolley Association is running two vintage cars (ex-Red Arrow and ex-Wilmington) on recently-electrified Phila Belt Line trackage on Delaware Avenue. Fare is $1, cars every 15 or 30 minutes, run is about 1 1/2 miles beside Penn's Landing. I had an enjoyable ride on Sep 18 on car 26. This operation is weekends only until November, but will probably run again in years to come--it was started to bolster Philadelphia's Tricentennial activities.

Information: For those wanting to keep current on Philadelphia rail activities, may I recommend "Cinders," published monthly (except summer) by Phila NRHS. Write Box 41, Huntingdon Valley PA 19006 for info on obtaining it.

My second Metroliner ride was on Sunday evening, Sep 19, train 125 to Washington, leaving Philadelphia 7:49pm, the last Metro service (except Fri and Sun nights when #127 runs), but not an Express Metroliner. Coach fare was $28, versus $24 for regular coach and $51 for Metroclub ($23 premium for a meal and wide seat--no thanks).

Metro 125 passengers were checked in at their lounge, after observing the destination and consist boards. The train arrived two minutes late with engine 904 (an AEM-7), three Amcoaches and one Amclub. The train maintained about a 2/3 full load, but only four people in the Amclub. The snack bar menu was labelled "Metroliner Service" and an item I'd never seen in the West was offered: "Tracpak"--a plate of fruit, cheese, crackers and snack mix--an Am-grabbag of food, for $2.25. Feature item was the Blue Ribbon chicken sandwich, and two attendants were serving the steady line of customers.

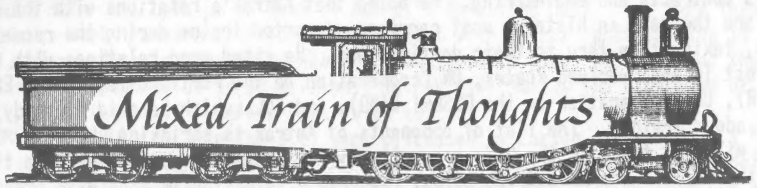


Antique streetcar running on the Penn's Landing Trolley line. Run is a 20-min roundtrip excursion. Penn's Landing Trolley Co. is operated by the Century IV Celebration and the Buckingham Valley Trolley Association.

Operationally, the trip was smooth, tho there was a 4-5 minute delay at Baltimore, waiting for a northbound to exit the tunnel south of the station. The cars were clean and quiet, and Amtrak's Express magazines were found in a few seat pockets. The AEM-7 handled its small consist nicely, with very rapid acceleration, and the usual click-clunk of the Amfleet slip-slide brake system when we slowed. Tracks were in excellent shape, with notable exceptions at various interlockings. The on-board atmosphere was subdied, with most passengers talking softly, reading, or just dozing the ride away. The crew used the PA well, with a good consist explanation, and explaining the slight delay at Baltimore. After a quick stop at Beltway, final Washington arrival was actually two minutes early!

Had I ridden #175, the MINUTE MAN, it would have taken 2 hours, 7 minutes and cost $4 less. I'd say riding #125 was just worth it. But too bad it can't be like the early Metroliner days, when the crews let passengers ride up front to watch that speedometer crest 100--a major selling point of the original Metroliners. Of course, a few GG-1 trains topped the 100 mark too--but all that's changed now. The Corridor is still just as busy and active tho, as Metro 125 proved impressively.

(P.S. At Washington, #441's equipment was lined up with two Amlounge IIs, and an agent was worried that picket lines might go up. All service southwest of Washington --except Conrail--was suspended.)



AMTRAK'S "HALLOWEEN" TIMETABLE, the fall schedule which took effect Oct 31, was distributed about two weeks before the effective date. The new timetable (see illustration below) has a full-color cover on glossy paper of a sunset scene over the ocean, with an inset photo of an Amtrak Amfleet train, probably a SAN DIEGAN.

The inside pages are on stiff newsprint paper. The timetable is 64 pages in length, four pages longer than the Apr 25 edition which it supplants, and printed in an edition of 1 million copies. The changes that the new schedule shows have been given previously in RTN, with the exception of the MONTREALER schedule changes: revisions have been made to provide for more convenient arrival times in Vermont for skiers. To make those changes, the train leaves Washington at 5:25pm, 55mins later than before. Southbound, it leaves Montreal at 7:40pm instead of 6:55. Amtrak notes, on the Empire Service page, that "New York State is undertaking major track rehabilitation between Albany-Rensselaer and New York. While our schedules have been adjusted to incorporate the benefits of this program, a full schedule reduction may not be in effect until late December." This timetable is in effect thru Apr 23, 1983.....

TAHOE BY TRAIN! The following are not in the Oct 31 Amtrak timetable, but they are effective Oct 31: Caltrans is funding bus connections to and from the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR in each direction at Truckee CA. Leaving Truckee, buses stop at Olympic Village (Squaw Valley), Alpine Meadows, Tahoe City (at junction of hwys 28 & 89), Kings Beach (at hwy 28 & Bear St), and Brockway (at hwy 28 & Nevada border). Buses to the ZEPHYR leave Brockway at 6:30am and 3:55pm; buses from the train arrive at Brockway at 10:50am and 8:15pm. The new service will be a boon to skiers, among others. Buses will run daily.....

AN ERROR IN the Oct 31 timetable is the accidental omission of times for the Oakland to San Francisco connecting bus from train 15, the SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA. The omitted times (on page 52) should be 9:40 and 9:45pm, according to Caltrans. Great Western Tours has set up a new Sacramento day tour package, and was especially concerned about the omission. While on the subject of the SPIRIT OF CALIF, it should be noted that rail observers are spreading the rumor that that train and one SAN JOAQUIN would be the first to be dropped from Caltrans funding if budgets are cut after the Brown-Gianturco regime ends.....

A SAN DIEGAN caught fire at Galivan, California, 6.2 miles east of San Juan Capistrano at 6pm on Oct 28. Train 580, with engines 291 and 220 and five Amfleet cars, apparently hit a metal bar used to install switches, which ruptured the fuel tanks on the two engines, starting a fire. The train was terminated there, with the engines and first car badly burned. Nine passengers were treated for minor injuries. Damage was estimated at $200,000. Vandalism is strongly suspected.....

★ ★ ★

NARP DIRECTORS MEETING was held in New Orleans Oct 8-10. Amtrak's Jim Larsen, Assistant VP-Operations, spoke with the directors at great length. His area of concern is contracts and engineering. He noted that Amtrak's relations with the railroads are the best in history; most carriers supported trains during the recent BLE strike, taking them thru to their destinations. He cited good relations with C&NW (interest in the Overland Route), BN (cooperation on the Portland leg of the EMPIRE BUILDER), UP (cooperation on the DESERT WIND), and SCL (which he said is ready to handle added trains). The list of opponents of Amtrak is shrinking, he said. About 34,000 miles of track in the U.S. are suitable for passenger service at this time, while the balance would need upgrading. But route selection is done with great difficulty. Rail traffic changes, with lines downgraded and others at saturation with new coal and chemical traffic are a problem. Also, flow changes due to mergers will continue. Service is frequently not feasible on freight-only lines due to fewer and longer sidings, reduced superelevation, crossing circuits, lack of passenger facilities, rail condition for passenger ride quality, lack of signals, or track connection problems. Costs of replacing rail now are $200,000 per mile for used welded rail, and the typical track connection costs over $1 million.....

★ ★ ★

PROBLEMS OF SCHEDULING were discussed by Amtrak's Larsen at the NARP Directors meeting. He said that Amtrak recognizes the problems of run padding, but notes that passengers may perceive a train as too slow if the padding is spread thru the schedule. Amtrak now is getting more involved in the internal stringing of schedules; in earlier years it looked only at end-to-end times. Elements of a schedule are running time, station dwell time, and recovery time. Recovery is a percentage added to run and dwell times--generally about 5-7% of the schedule, or six minutes per 100 miles. Adherence to schedules is being helped by new equipment and a temporary slowdown in freight shipments. SCL's contract has incentives based upon intermediate points, and experience with it is good, he said, with accountability at the railroad division level. The same idea is essential on other lines as contracts are revised, he said. He said he would like NARP to help eliminate local speed restrictions. On the CRESCENT route there are 42 cities with speed restrictions. Dallas has slow speeds even out in open land that is now annexed to the city. Austin has a speed limit even in separated right-of-way in a freeway median. Amtrak is working with Conrail to raise speeds over long sections of good track on the LAKE SHORE LTD route; current speeds are not as high as the track will allow. The Milwaukee Road is trying to do a good job within limitations. The plan now is to keep both tracks instead of single-tracking it, so gradually sections not previously done will be upgraded; however, Amtrak will run the EMPIRE BUILDER on the better track when they can. The Milwaukee Road is the only way to Milwaukee, he said. The C&NW is not workable now; problem is access at Chicago, needing a $5 million track connection to use Union Station. Also, rail north of Kenosha has pre-1929 rail and cannot take Amtrak speeds (there was a different rail-manufacturing process before 1929). The "level of utility" that railroads must maintain for Amtrak lines is not based on FRA standards--the standards didn't exist in 1971, when Amtrak started up. There is no clear definition of the level, nor is there the means to enforce the level of utility provisions. Larsen said that relaid welded rail is suitable for most Amtrak needs--it does not need heavier rail. Amtrak's best use of capital for improving speeds, he said, is to upgrade slow speed restrictive areas, rather than make increases in the 80-90-100mph ranges. The benefits are not proportional to the costs involved in high speeds; better to get 20mph up to 30, 30mph up to 40, etc.....

THE MISSOURI PACIFIC was Amtrak's strongest opponent in 1977, but is now one of the "top six" of Amtrak's carriers, Larsen told the NARP Directors. The change to better cooperation was started by Amtrak's threatening court actions. Then on-time performance improved, schedules were shortened and speeds increased. Larsen did not name the other five top railroads.....

THE INLAND ROUTE via Hartford CT was the subject of a question from NARP directors to Amtrak's Jim Larsen. He said the line could take a few more trains, but he would defer his opinion to that of Amtrak's Marketing Dept. Any more than a few trains would require traffic control system with Amtrak participating in its costs. Responding to a question about the Shelbyville line, Larsen noted that Conrail says its book value is $8 million. Amtrak will follow the direction of Congress, purchasing it if Congress says to do so.....

SOME DIFFICULT LINES in the U.S. were discussed by Larsen. The D&H is a "marginal operation"; track conditions are "deplorable", making Amtrak non-competitive on the ADIRONDACK route. The line over the Tehachepi Mountains between Los Angeles and Bakersfield is "overall the most tortuous in the U.S." It has 2.4% grades plus 10° curves plus heavy freight usage. It requires rail replacement or shifting every two years. He didn't go so far as to say it's impossible for passenger train use, however. The UP's Kansas-Pacific route, he said, is a classic downgrading example, now nothing more than a rural branch. The LaJunta-Denver line has incredible congestion with slow coal trains. One track has been removed, and it's now impractical to replace it. The Rio Grande and Santa Fe will double-track the remaining line where possible, but can't do the entire line. It's ironic that most coal traffic is C&S. Impossible operating difficulties would face Amtrak on this line, and horrendous capital costs would be necessary to make it usable.....

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THE BROADWAY LIMITED will remain on the Fort Wayne route, Amtrak's Larsen told NARP Directors. Amtrak now agrees with Conrail to accept single-tracking of some segments, provided Amtrak is not responsible for signals. The eastbound track is the best, and will be the new main. Conversion starts this fall.....

WHERE'S THE TRAIN STATION? might be the caption of this photo taken by reader Michael Snyder at the off-ramp of highway 17 to The Alameda in San Jose CA. The explanation is that the Amtrak sign points to the San Jose station, while the "train station" sign points toward the Santa Clara peninsula commute train station.....

CONRAIL'S PROFITS DROPPED in the third quarter by 8.7%, to $59.3 million because its freight business was down 25% due to the recession.....

OHIO'S HIGH-SPEED TRAIN ballot proposal is expected to go down to certain defeat on election day (Nov 2). The Ohio Ass'n of RR Psgrs expected that, but decided to endorse the proposal anyway, simply for the advertising value. After the elections, OARP plans to push for extension of existing trains.....

THE LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION of RR Psgrs are pushing for several proposed new train services: New Orleans-Biloxi, New Orleans-Baton Rouge, and daily operation of the SUNSET LIMITED by 1984. That year, the World's Fair in New Orleans and the Summer Olympics in Los Angeles will be on simultaneously, at either end of the SUNSET route. Looks like a daily train by then would be a winner.....

LOUISVILLE-ASHLAND KENTUCKY train, a state-funded 403-b daytime steam-powered train, has been proposed and pushed by the Kentucky ARP. The proposed train would be operated by the state park system.....

AMTRAK POLICE APPREHENDED a bank robber at NY's Penn Station after he had stolen $12,854 from the Chemical Bank on the station's concourse on Oct 22.....

AMTRAK CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS VP James E. Stiner Jr. was released from employment with Amtrak Oct 15. No successor has been named yet.....

THE CRESCENT SHOULD run tri-weekly west of Atlanta, Amtrak's Graham Claytor believes, according to reliable reports.....

CORRECTING THE CORRECTIONS Dept.: The actor who played Rhett Butler in "Gone With the Wind" was Clark Gable--not Gary Cooper or Cary Grant. Quite a few readers brought this error to our attention (see RTN 252).....

LAWRENCE D. GILSON, Amtrak VP-Corporate Development, resigned recently.....

SPIRIT OF CALIFORNIA becomes an all-reserved train on Oct 31. Tour promoters are trying to get SP to allow it to stop in Berkeley southbound Nov 5 and northbd Nov 7 for a tour group to a football game in Los Angeles.....

AMTRAK BOARD MEETING of Oct 20 revealed that new economy room sleeping cars will not be ordered before the late 1980's. NARP wrote to Claytor urging faster action on them, pointing out that there are six overnight trains with no economy room cars. At his Oct 26 news conference, Claytor reiterated the plan--new sleeping cars will not be ordered in quantity for the East until 1987. The NARP Directors meeting was informed that Amtrak is looking toward building a few prototype low-level cars and running them (for 18 months, according to Claytor) before placing any large order. Both sleeper and diner are being designed. The designs are not finalized, but the Marketing Dept. requires that the sleeper have 34 beds--current thinking is 14 economy doubles and three deluxe rooms. Amtrak considers extra-large windows for diner or diner-lounge. Shape of cars will probably be a modified rectangular shape, with a slight waist-high bulge. At the Amtrak Board Meeting it was learned that Amtrak plans to rebuild up to 26 more sleepers and 10 diners. More baggage cars are also supposed to be HEP-ed, to get more mail business.....

NEW YORK-FLORIDA sleeper passengers may get complimentary hors d'oeuvres, meals and newspapers, but details of the plan are not finalized yet.....

DINING ENHANCEMENTS (continued from page 3)

Effective with the Oct 31 schedule changes (actually some of the changes were phased in before that date), all long distance dining cars will return to stainless steel flatware instead of plastic. Lunch menus will be expanded, and more entrees will appear on the dinner menus. The soft paper tablecloths and silk flowers in bud vases will remain. In December, Amtrak will change from paper plates to 9-inch oval plastic plates which are said to be larger than any used by airlines. Breakfast menus will again include a continental breakfast, and will add blueberry and corn muffins. Luncheon menus will include tuna salad as a new item. For dinner, prime rib will be a standard selection on all dining cars, and Amtrak will add a "delicious" barbecued chicken and a filet of sole stuffed with crab meat. The latter two items will be pre-cooked,and heated aboard the train. The dessert and liquor menu will be expanded. Brownies and carrot cake will be added, and also rosé wine (which many passengers have requested). Amtrak said that most menu prices will not be increased. For improvement of snack bar and lounge car menus, Amtrak will add several new "plain and simple" snack items such as yogurt, a dried fruit and nut mix, and honey-roasted cashews or almonds and fruit. Additional light meal items such as soups, chili and salads will also be sold "in certain snack and lounge cars." Many existing menu items will be replaced with higher-quality, nationally known brands such as Dannon yogurt and Sarah Lee Danish pastry. Amclub service will be upgraded to include complimentary meals. Claytor said that food service was badly hurt by Congressionally-mandated cost saving, and he noted that Congressional committees have agreed to allow Amtrak to cover food service costs with up to 10% of ticket revenues.

"THE PANIC BOX" will not appear this issue. It will resume next issue. The Panic Box was pre-empted this issue by coverage of the sudden and unexpected startup of the Oxnard-L.A. commuter train.

CARS & CONSISTS

*CALUMET, train 322, Chicago Sep 16: cars 9623, 9615, 9620, 9616; engine 247 (push-pull arrangement.

*INDIANA CONNECTION, train 324, Chicago Sep 16: engine 358; cars 9618, 9624.

*ILLINOIS ZEPHYR, train 347, Chicago Sep 16: engine 314; cars 21169, 23030, 21147.

BROADWAY LIMITED/CAPITOL LIMITED, train 40/440, Chicago Sep 16: engines 337, 351; cars 1183, 1244, 1357, 1262*, 2990* "Joseph V. MacDonald", 4714*, 4709*, 28010, 3124, 25062, 25068, 25061, 2881, 2082, 2448 "Oak Grove" (*thru cars to DC).

*EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS, train 74, Rochester Oct 1: Turbo units 157, 188, 183, 179, 156.

*MAPLE LEAF, train 64, Rochester Oct 2: engine 347; cars 21017, 20224, 21047, 1373.

*NIAGARA RAINBOW, train 62, Rochester Oct 2: Turbo units 152, 175, 180, 182, 161.

*BENJAMIN FRANKLIN, train 193, Boston Oct 7: engine 350; cars 21090, 21140, 21189, 20026, 21050, 21139, 21007.

*CARDINAL, train 51, Washington Oct 8: engine 370; cars 1265, 2450 "Beech Grove", 28005, 4639, 4648, 4722, 4715, 4711. Same, Oct 17: engines 959 (NY-DC), 368, 269 (DC-Chicago); cars 1265, 2920, 2450, 3104, 4719, 4725, 4712, 4733, 20233, 21063, 21809, (deadheads Alexandria-Chicago:) private car NYC 48, Hi-level 39926, Superliners 33008, 32009, 34095.

*MONTREALER, train 61, Montreal Sep 29: engine 309; cars 1231, 2893, 2056, 20214, 28300, 21840, 21805.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Oakland Sep 24: engines 227, 289; cars 1176, 39913, 31040, 31036, 34059, 34049, 33010, 38016, 32018, 32045, SP bus. car 117 "Tucson".

*CITY OF NEW ORLEANS, train 58, New Orleans Oct 10: engine 257; cars 1162, 2464 "Silver Isle", 2900 "Pacific Bay", 28306, 4622, 4011, 4017, 4000.

*CRESCENT, train 20, New Orleans Oct 11: engines 255, 258; cars 1364, 1624, 4621, 4733, 4734, 4633, 4727, 4623, 3108, 8515, 2443 "Walnut Grove", 2894 "Pacific Rest", 2439 "Pacific Lodge".

EMPIRE BUILDER, train 7, Chicago Oct 10: engines 310 (Havre-Seattle), 354, 329 (Chicago-Seattle); cars 1176, 39915, 34093, 34096, 38034, 33009, 31003*, 32033*, 32011. (*Chicago-Portland thru cars.)

*MOUNT RAINIER, train 796, Portland Oct 12: engine 206; cars 34006, 34013.

*PIONEER, train 26, Portland Oct 12: engine 218; cars 2987 "Pine Shore", 39930, 38026, 31009, 34051.

LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48/448, Rochester Oct 5: engines 312, 338; cars 1213, 1218, 1619, 4020, 4637, 4647, 4617, 3101, 8505, 2917 "Pacific Island", 2086, 2430* "Pacific Falls", 4611*, 4613*, 4610*, 10002 technical training car. (*thru cars to Boston.)

*Orlando Amtrak equipment display, Orlando FL Oct 9: engine 377, cars 32009 "George M. Pullman", 33008, 34095, 2476 "Sarasota", 8528, 28001, 25046.

*SILVER METEOR, train 88, Orlando Oct 9: engine 389; cars 1228, 3112, 25002, 25003, 25033, 2461 "Silver Crag".

*LAKE CITIES, train 352, Chicago-Toledo Oct 2: engine 249; cars 21167, 21236, 21237, 20232.

*PATRIOT, train 169, Sep 29: engines 209 (Boston-New Haven), AEM-7 number unknown New Haven-Washington; cars 20142, 21182, 21014, 21044, 21053, 1253.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"It is obviously too early to write off Caltrain as a failure... But if it does fail, I do not want to read or hear another word about the 'Big Red Cars' and how everyone wishes they were back in service again."

--Bruce Winters, Editor of Daily News (Southern California) in a column entitled "Caltrain Deserves Public Support", October 24.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Nov 13: Private obs car Lehigh Valley 353 Boston-NY RT, on COLONIAL & MERCHANTS LTD; 5 hours in NYC. Morning restoratives, champagne brunch, dinner prepared aboard. Limit 20. D.L. Ross, 300 Winston Dr, #2020, Cliffside Park NJ 07010.

Feb 18-23, 1983: Carlsbad Holiday; 2 nites on SUNSET from S. Cal., visit Carlsbad Caverns, Davis Mts State Park, etc. Fully escorted; last yr sold out. $379 & up. Pacific RR Society Inc, Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516. Phone (714) 684-7458.

Jul 20-24, 1983: Rails to Richmond: 1983 NRHS Convention in Richmond VA. For info, write: Herbert A. Richwine, Convention Chairman, Old Dominion Chapter, NRHS, PO Box 8583, Richmond VA 23226.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to:
RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

EXPRESS ADS

VIA RAIL CANADA, AMTRAK, EURAIL PASS, 20th CENTURY RAIL TOURS - tickets and reservations - WE KNOW HOW! One call does it all. Pay by credit card or check. Tickets mailed directly to you. Contact GREAT WESTERN TOURS, masters of rail travel, Sheraton Palace Hotel, Suite 900, San Francisco 94105. (415) 398-2994.

DINING CAR CHINA, glasses, silver, cloth. Timetables, guides, stationery, rules, metal & Pullman items, annual reports. Many railroads. Long stamped envelope brings list. J. McClellan, 1752 S. Wichita, Wichita, KS 67213. Will buy items.

CONFUSED BY PHILLY'S RAIL SYSTEMS? Let Delaware Valley Rails make order out of chaos. 192 pages of maps, photos, facts. $11.50 (Pennsylvanians, add 69¢ tax). $12.50 outside U.S. John R. Pawson, Box 411, Willow Grove, PA 19090.

SWISS RAIL TOUR, April 15-23, 1983, from New York City. Write: Rail/Road Tours, Hyde Park Travel Bureau, P.O. Box 24, Hyde Park, MA 02136.

1983 TRAIN CALENDAR. Convenient 9x12 size features full-color photo of Amtrak's Broadway Limited at Lima. Whole year at a glance. Send $1.00 donation to: Ohio Association of Railroad Passengers, Box 653-N, Xenia, OH 45385.

THE BEST OF YESTERDAY (AND THE DAY BEFORE). Finishing out my "thinning out" collection of railroadiana. Large list - much passenger. $1.00 for list to: David Cooper, #14 Jackson Building, Paris, TN 38242.

"ISSUES IN AMERICAN RAIL TRAVEL", RTN's little book on important problems with America's rail passenger revival, is almost ready for publication. Price will be $4.50, which includes relevant tax & postage. Full details will be given later in RTN. Rail Travel News, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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LETTERS (continued from page 2)

"very often." If the D&RGW is consistently selling out, one would assume that the run is a financial success. Perhaps thought could be given to daily operation, or a second section of the train. I'm hoping the D&RGW is not just turning down business in order to someday ask to discontinue the train for lack of interest.

Jim Crowl
Las Vegas, Nevada

As a subscriber and a professional railroader I want to comment on RTN. It is always interesting reading, and I am fascinated with the amount of material you are able to dig up. I have always been an ardent dome car advocate and fan so I must admit that I have followed your continued saga of the Amtrak domes with much interest.

I also want to comment on your Panic Box. Whether or not you continue including the info in this column is not an issue with me--they are facts and we as railroaders do realize that these things do happen. However, the unfortunate thing that I see is that you seem to take them as a joke; they are not! Trying to satirize them by giving them a silly name like "Panic Box" is VERY poor journalism. I would suggest that, if you retain this info, please do rename your column. Many of the events listed therein are serious happenings that MUST NOT be made light of. A simple title like "Amtrak Events" would be much more applicable. It may not seem as humorous, however these are NOT humorous events and such a heading would be more in a vein of responsible, professional reporting.

Thanks for the good magazine!

Mike Gelhaus
Spokane, Washington

(Editor's note: Obviously, we need to repeat occasionally for the benefit of new subscribers that "Panic Box" is Amtrak's own term for a makeshift, substitute food service when a regular food service car cannot supply normal meals, due to some problem or disaster. The term is not meant to satirize or make light of Amtrak's problems listed therein, which happen on any railroad. Due to space limitations we can record only major occurrences, or minor ones of particular interest due to their unusual nature, so we must omit many instances of Amtrak's going out of their way to resolve the relatively minor problems that arise with passengers, but they are impressive, and we may do a feature on them sometime.)

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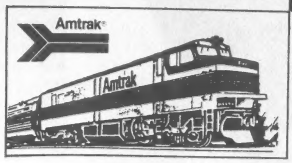

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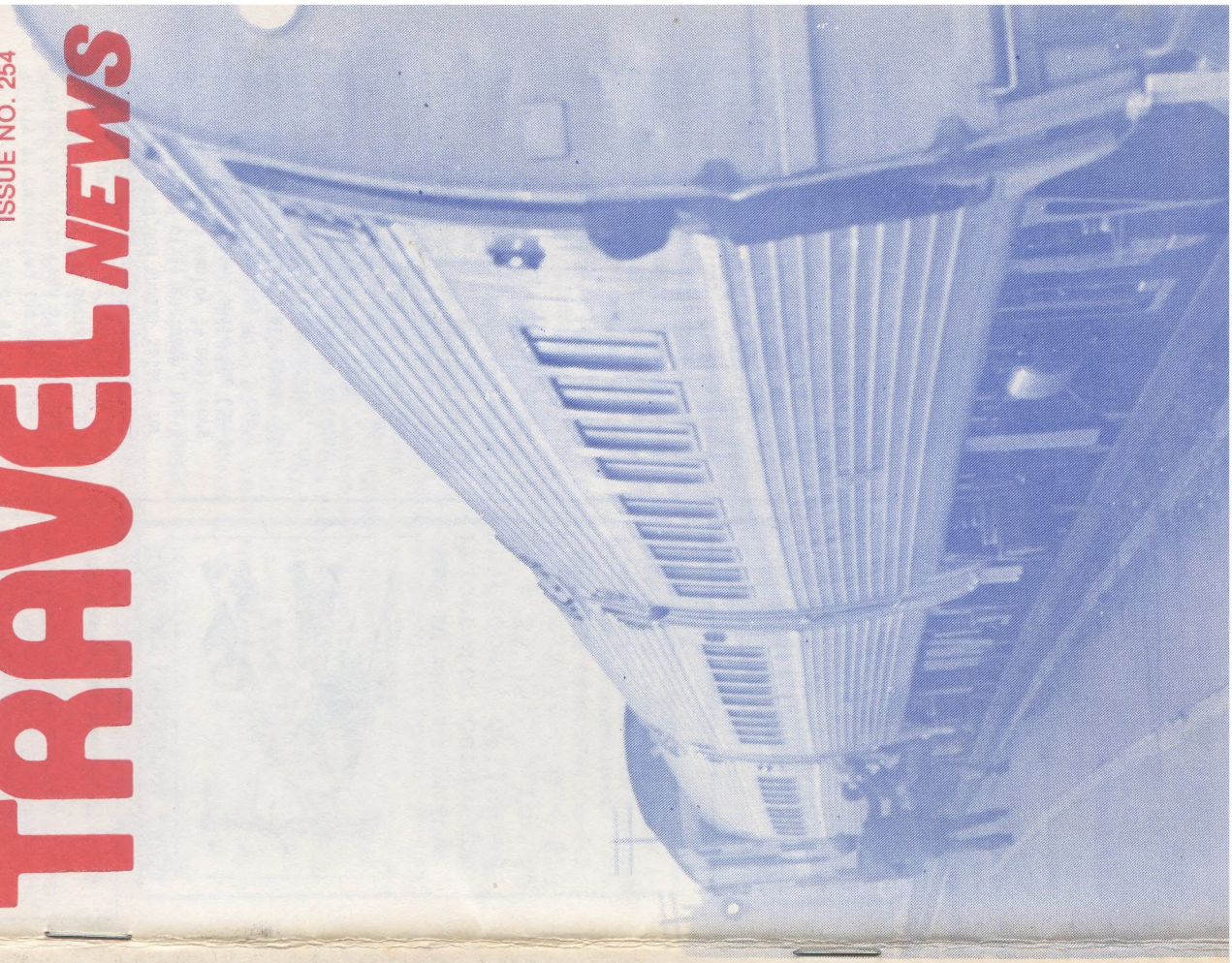

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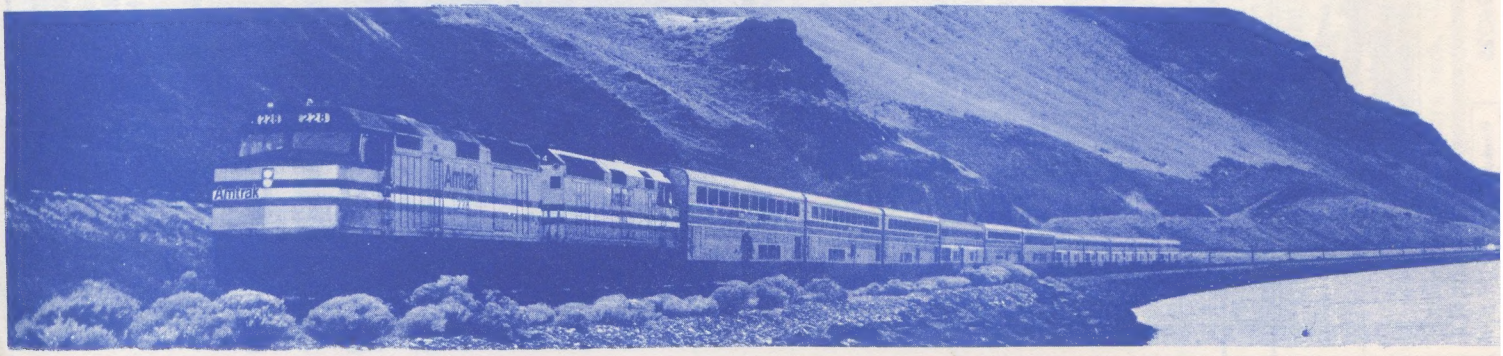
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